



## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
*Monday, June 1, 2015*

### **Board Members in Attendance:**

Jan Davis, Cecil Bothwell, Chris Pelly

### **Staff in Attendance:**

Jannice Ashley, Interim Chief Steve Belcher, Chief Scott Burnette, Alex Carmichael, Paul Fetherston, Captain Stony Gonce, Christina Hallingse, Dawa Hitch, Polly McDaniel

### **Guests in Attendance:**

Gwen Wisler, Chris Hollis, Robby Coleman

## **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the meeting of 4/27/2015 were approved on Councilman Chris Pelly's motion, Councilman Cecil Bothwell's second on a 3-0 vote.

## **2. STAFF UPDATES**

### **a. Police Department Quarterly Updates - Steve Belcher, Interim Chief**

#### **i. Strategic Operations Plan Update:**

Interim Chief Steve Belcher outlined the history and status of the Police Departments Strategic Operations Plan, which will be implemented in July, 2015. The first quarterly progress report will be in August, 2015.

Chairman Davis asked if the Public Safety Committee will have a chance to see the progress report. Chief Belcher responded that the Committee would have that in August.

#### **ii. Organizational Assessment:**

The Matrix report has been thoroughly reviewed. A tracking document has been created for the performance management of the 60-70 action items in the report, which will take between six and twenty-four months to implement. A staff lead has been designated for each item.

Councilman Bothwell noted that the Matrix consultant recommended a repeated survey of the Department. He asked if that had been scheduled. Interim Chief Belcher replied that it had not been scheduled yet. That should be conducted at least a year after the original survey.

#### **iii. Other Accomplishments:**

Interim Chief Belcher highlighted other departmental accomplishments:

- 34 New patrol cars
- 10 Detective Unit unmarked cars
- 41 Car cameras
- Many sergeants graduated a 3-month training program
- Captain Gonce graduated from a management training program at the F.B.I. Academy
- C.A.L.E.A. manager hired
- Promotions at the annual awards banquet

Councilman Bothwell asked if new vehicles are assigned to senior officers or if they are assigned to patrol. Chief Belcher responded that the vehicles are fairly well distributed throughout the districts and are rotated, but the specific assignments can be provided to the Committee.

Chairman Davis asked how many cars lack cameras. Chief Belcher replied that around 100 cars lack cameras, but approximately 40 of those do not need them.

### **3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **a. Consider Approval of Revisions to Animal Ordinances Removing Exemptions for Circuses and Animal Exhibits – Jannice Ashely, Assistant City Attorney**

The U.S. Cellular Center changed its bookings administrative policy to exclude contracting events with performing wild or exotic animals, effectively banning circuses at the venue. At that time, the City Council's Governance Committee instructed Legal staff to review city-wide animal ordinances related to exemptions for circuses and animal exhibits. Research showed no state statute requiring exemptions. Many other N.C. cities have exemptions, but it is not clear why.

The changes reviewed in the staff report focus on two areas: (1) removing the zoological parks, animal exhibitions or circuses exemption from Sec. 3-12. - Animal Care, and (2) revising Sec. 3-14. - Wild Animals to pertain to both persons and entities within the city limits, to delete the exemption for allowing wild animals in animal exhibitions or circuses and to modify the exemption as it relates to zoological parks to apply only to zoological parks that are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Councilman Bothwell asked if revising Sec. 3-14. - Wild Animals would allow for the keeping of wild animals for the purpose of rehabilitation, under its "educational or scientific work" exception. Ms. Ashley said that it presumably would, but the state's definition is unclear.

Chairman Davis invited Christopher Hollis of Feld Entertainment to address the Committee. Feld Entertainment opposes the administration policy changes at the U.S. Cellular Center and asks the City not to amend the animal ordinances city-wide. If the ordinance is revisited, Mr. Hollis asked that the terms "bona fide" and "educational" be further defined and that the Zoological Association of America be added to the list of recognized accrediting organizations.

Councilman Pelly asked Mr. Hollis how the circus would be considered 'education' rather than 'entertainment.' Mr. Hollis replied that it is entertaining and educational because it allows people to experience something that they would not otherwise be able to experience.

Chairmen Davis invited Robby Coleman of Asheville Voice for Animals to address the Committee. Mr. Coleman applauded the U.S. Cellular Center administrative policy change and supported city-

wide animal ordinance revisions. He said that zoos tend to create habitats for animals that mimic natural habitats. Circuses do not provide natural habitats and train animals to perform certain ways – which is not an educational experience. Mr. Coleman offered ordinance language from the General Council of Animal Care International better definitions. Jannice Ashley noted that House Bill 554 - Protect Public from Dangerous Wild Animals currently under consideration in the North Carolina General Assembly more specifically defines ‘dangerous’ and ‘wild animals.’

The Committee directed staff to further review the definitions and language proposals, then send the ordinance revisions directly to Council.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS (See attachment)**

##### **a. Status of Policy Development for Body Cameras- Steve Belcher, Interim Chief**

###### **i. Management Policy, Training, and Purchasing Plan**

Body Worn Camera Systems (B.W.C.S.) have been around for about seven years. Twenty percent of U.S. agencies have them and eighty percent are evaluating or considering them. APD has studied various types of B.W.C.S through focus groups. That study has led to recommendations to standardize equipment with the Taser brand. Pros of B.W.C.S. include: better evidence, training and coaching of officers, better resolutions of public complaints, and increased accountability. Cons include: citizen privacy issues, stringent compliance issues, logistics, and resources.

There will be a department-wide training that will cover the B.W.C.S.’ purpose, retention, and recording protocols. Cameras will be distributed among the Charlie, Baker, Adam, Downtown, and Housing Units. The program will be reviewed by the Professional Standards Division and the City Auditor in the first six months and again annually.

APD seeks to apply for three grants to assist in funding: (1) Federal Department of Justice Grant (match included); (2) Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (pass through grant – no match required); and (3) the Edward Byrne Justice Grant Application – Preprogrammed Grant (City \$38,000, County \$12,000.)

Recommendation to the full Council for the application of all three grants was approved on Councilman Chris Pelly’s motion, Councilman Cecil Bothwell’s second on a 3-0 vote.

###### **ii. Records Retention and Access Policy**

A records policy for body camera video has been written by the City Attorneys’ Office. That policy includes when to turn cameras on. Cameras are to be activated during calls for service, traffic and pedestrian stops, emergency calls, prisoner transportation, arrests, citations, investigative stops, and inventories of high value items. Videos will be digitally tagged for future value such as complaints, civil liability, and training. Cameras will remain inactive during officer breaks, when identifying victims of child abuse, medical treatments, or other meetings including confidential information, strip searches, and when requested by victims. Officers will be required to record why a camera is turned off.

Cameras will be assigned to individual officers. They will record date and time stamps. Records will be kept by a third party and downloaded daily. Cameras will be inspected monthly, and Professional Standards will track their use.

Access to video will be granted for criminal prosecution, by court order, or when the Chief of Police determines there is an overriding public purpose.

Chairman Davis thanked Interim Chief Belcher and Chief Burnette for their work and service to the Police Department during this period of transition.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**5. ADJOURN**

Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 5:04 p.m. without objection.